

15
*The CRISIS: or, The uncertain Doom of
Kingdoms at particular Times,*

CONSIDERED

With Reference to GREAT-BRITAIN and her
Colonies in their present Circumstances.

A

S E R M O N,

Preached in

HANOVER, VIRGINIA,

OCTOBER 28, 1756;

A Day appointed by the SYNOD of *New-York*, to
be observed as a *General Fast*, on account of
the present War with *France*.

By the Reverend

Mr. SAMUEL DAVIES, A. M.

With a PREFACE

By the Reverend Mr. THOMAS GIBBONS.

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THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE
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WASHINGTON, D. C.

MEMORANDUM

FOR THE SECRETARY

DATE

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FOR THE SECRETARY

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T H E
P R E F A C E.

HE Author of the following Discourse, and my worthy and intimate Friend, tells me, in a Letter I lately received from him, “ that “ a Thought struck him, after a Reviewal “ of the Sermon, that it might perhaps be of some “ Service to the Public.” He adds farther, “ that “ if I should think so, I might publish it ;” and then mentions “ my introducing it into the World “ with a Preface.”

I am in no Pain about any Censure upon myself for my Opinion, that the Discourse deserved Publication ; and it is distinguished with such an uncommon Union of Piety, Patriotism, Learning, and sacred Oratory, that, upon the Supposition that my Name had any Weight with the Public, the Sermon stands in no need of my Recommendation, but may safely venture itself abroad, where there is any true Relish for Religion and Eloquence, in the Lustre and under the Protection of its own intrinsic Merits.

As I have so far complied with the Mind of my Friend, as to draw up a Preface to his Discourse, I am sensible that I cannot better please him, or better engage my Reader, than by endeavouring, tho’ it should be in a much inferior Strain, to promote the Design of my reverend Brother, by urging upon the Conscience the same Truths and Duties which he has represented and enforced ; and the rather, as there is some material, and indeed melancholy Difference in the Situation of public Affairs between the Time when this Sermon was preached, and the present Juncture.

And what a loud Call is there to *Great-Britain* and
A 2 *Ireland,*

Ireland, as well as our *Colonies* abroad, to cry mightily unto God, and to turn every one from his evil Way? We are undoubtedly a very sinful People, and overspread with, may I not say, upon the Comparison of the Good and Bad among us, a *general* Torrent of Infidelity, Prophaneness, and Immorality? We have long enjoyed Religion in the Purity of its Reformation from *Popery*, and we have been long favoured with civil and sacred Liberty in its widest Extent, and highest Glory; and yet we have still sinned on with an high Hand and an out-stretched Arm against Heaven, and have made an enormous Accession to our Guilt by the Abuse of our distinguishing Mercies and Privileges, as if we thought the Sunshine of our national Prosperity and Blessings was to serve no other Purpose than that of drawing out the poisonous and ungrateful Malignity of our depraved Hearts, and thereby making the Clouds that were necessarily gathering against us into a future Storm of Vengeance, the more heavy, and in the End the more dreadful and ruinous.

At length God has appeared in his Providence with very dark and awful Tokens of his Displeasure against us. War has been let loose, and has already made a most miserable Havoc, especially in some of our Plantations, where the Tragedies of *Indian* Barbarity, instigated no doubt by *French* Politics and Influence, have been so shocking, that Humanity can hardly bear the Relation of them. One Disappointment and Defeat has succeeded upon another. Our Enemies have scarce fail'd of Success in any of their Schemes and Enterprizes, and particularly the present Year has beheld our King's Dominions in *Germany* overrun by the *French*, and the King of *Prussia* is now so invironed by his Enemies, that with all his indefatigable Care and resolute Bravery, it will be little less than a miraculous Interposition of Providence in his Favour, if he should not fall a Sacrifice to their inveterate Hatred, and confederate Power.

Perhaps

Perhaps never was there a Period, in which, all things considered, not only *Great-Britain*, but even *Europe* itself, were in more imminent Danger; and the rather, as the Powers that now seem to be bearing down all Resistance before them, are united together in the Bonds of a Religion, if it may be called a Religion, that has laid waste the Liberties of Mankind, and has especially drank deep of the Blood of the Saints and Martyrs of *Jesus*. And should *Popery* subject the Nations of the World to its despotic and uncontrollable Power, what can we expect, but that that Lamb in Inferiority, that Fox in Equality, but that roaring and ravening Lion, when it has gained the Ascendency, will again discover its real Nature, republish and execute its sanguinary Edicts, and spread Horror, Slaughter, and Devastation, among all that will not tamely submit to its Yoke, a Yoke that neither we nor our Fathers were able to bear. The late cruel Persecutions in *France* of its innocent and inoffensive Natives, may well make us tremble at the tremendous Fate of *Great-Britain*, should that aspiring and restless Kingdom annex these Lands to its Conquests, and pour in *Popery* upon us, that has proved by its Massacres and Inquisitions, how well it deserves the Name of the *Abomination that makes desolate*.

And now, Friends, Brethren, Countrymen, shall we still continue in our Impenitence, and go on still to fill up the Measure of our Iniquities? Shall we dare to provoke the Almighty to execute all that Judgment, which we are sure he can so easily bring upon us? Shall we still add Fuel to the Flames of the divine Indignation, by our continued and insolent Rebellion against the most High and Holy God, when it is so much our Interest, in every View, to have the kindled and spreading Vengeance stopt, and that *God should turn away from his fierce Anger, that we perish not*? Shall we ever imagine that we can
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harden ourselves against Heaven, and prosper, or that open and flagitious Iniquity, or the superficial Appearances, or empty Forms of Godliness, at the same time that we are Strangers to its Spirit and Power, are the Methods by which a People, so highly favoured as ourselves, can hope the Almighty will avert the Storm that hangs over us, and *cause his Face to shine upon us, that we may be saved?*

Come then, let the Ax be laid to the Root of the Tree. Let the openly Prophane and Ungodly, that are not good enough to be called *Heathens* yet, hear and obey the Order of an *Heathen* Monarch, and *cry mightily unto God, and turn every one from his evil Way*. And let the Formalist, and mere nominal Professor no longer satisfy themselves with a Name to live while they are dead. Let us all deplore the national Sins, and deprecate the national Ruin; and let us remember, in our Confessions and Penitence, that we are not to content ourselves with general Declarations against Vice, or with large Acknowledgments and Lamentations over the Crimes of others, but that it is our Duty to enter upon a solemn Review of ourselves, and *search and try our Ways, and turn again unto the Lord*. Are there not with us, even with us, who have run into the Excesses of Riot that others have done, Sins against the Lord our God? where are that Faith in Christ, that Application of his Righteousness, that godly Sorrow, that evangelical Humility, that Victory over the Lusts of the Flesh and Spirit, that universal Self-denial and Mortification, that Patience and Submission to the Will of Heaven, that Disengagement from the Things of Sense and Time, that Commerce and Communion with invisible Realities and Glories, that Closet and Family-Devotion, that humble and heavenly Walk with God, that brotherly Love, Meekness, Justice, Truth, and unwearied Efforts and Endeavours to do good, and to shine as Lights in the World, which are

are so essential to the divine Life, and so ornamental to our sacred Profession, and into an Obedience to which it is the great End of our holy Religion to reduce our Hearts and Lives, that we may serve our Generation according to the Will of our God, may be dressed for Eternity, and be *made meet*, whenever we shall be called thither, *for the Inheritance among the Saints in Light.*

Be persuaded then, O thou wilful, presumptuous, and flagrant Sinner, to break off thy Sins by Righteousness, and no longer harbour and cherish those Serpents, whose Poisons are certain Misery and Destruction: Be persuaded, O formal and lukewarm Professor, not to content thyself without real and vital Godliness, as thou wouldest, both in the present and future World, be blessed with real and actual Salvation. Don't mock God with a Shadow, when you hope from him substantial and immortal Happiness.

O! for a blessed Confederacy among all Ranks and Degrees of Men, and may not only *Great-Britain* and *Ireland*, but even our remotest *Colonies*, mingle in this sacred Union of Souls, to repent of our Sins, to implore the divine Pardon and Favour, to lay down our Weapons of Rebellion, and yield up ourselves to God, as one living Sacrifice, as all of us alive from the Dead, to be for ever sacred to him! In this way we may expect temporal and national Blessings, at least there is no other in which we can hope for them; or let what Destruction soever come upon us of a natural kind, we may be assured that it shall go well with us as to our spiritual and immortal Interests; and that even Pestilences, War, Famine, or Martyrdom, shall never hurt that Life which is *bid with Christ in God*, and only prove the early Road, if I may so call it, from this Vale of Sorrow, *into the Fulness of Joy in our Father's Presence, and the everlasting Pleasures at his right Hand.*

To

To accomplish so great and desirable a Work, may that God, with whom is the Residue of the Spirit, fulfil his Promise, that * *in the latter Days he will pour out his Spirit upon the House of David, and upon the Inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of Grace and Supplications, when the Land shall mourn, every Family apart*; and may this Mourning, as it stands in the sacred Text near the Promise, be also accompanied in every Penitent, with the pleasant Views of *that Fountain which is opened to the House of David, and to the Inhabitants of Jerusalem, for Sin and for Uncleannefs*. Guilt may force out the desponding Sigh, or the *iron Tear*, but Repentance is never so free, or flows so genuine from the Heart, as when it is mingled with a Sense of the Riches of forgiving Mercy, through the Merits and Mediation of our blessed Lord and Saviour: and Experience ratifies what the Divine Word has declared, *But there is Forgiveness with thee, that thou may'st be feared* †.

But it is time for me to withdraw, and to give leave for my worthy Brother to speak. That this his pious and seasonable Discourse, and all his various and indefatigable Labours for the Glory of God and the Good of Souls, may be crowned with eminent Success, is the Prayer of one who desires to tread in his Steps, and to be enriched with a Portion of the same Spirit which I am persuaded he eminently possesses! And as this Prayer is the fervent Desire of my Heart, so, as a Testimony of it, and of that Affection I bear to the Author of the following Discourse, I publickly subscribe my Hand,

THOMAS GIBBONS.

L O N D O N,

Oct. 6, 1757.

* Zech. xii. 10---12. ib. xiii. 1.

† Psal. cxxx. 4.



The CRISIS: or, The uncertain Doom
of KINGDOMS at particular Times.

J O N A H iii. 9.

*Who can tell if GOD will turn and repent,
and turn away from His fierce Anger,
that we perish not ?*

A STATE of Uncertainty, a Suspence between Hope and Fear about a Matter of Importance, is a very painful and anxious State. And by how much the more important and interesting the Matter, by so much the more distressing is the Uncertainty. Now what can be more important, what more interesting, than our Country? Our Country is a Word of the highest and most endearing Import: It includes our Friends and Relatives, our Liberty, our Property, our Religion; in short, it includes our earthly All. And when the Fate of our Country, and all that it includes, is dreadfully doubtful; when we are tossed and agitated betwixt the alternate Waves of Hope and Fear; when, upon taking a View of the present Po-
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sture of our Affairs, we can only ask with painful Solicitude, *What will be the End of these Things?* And when even the Consideration of the divine Mercy upon our Repentance, cannot give us any Assurance of Deliverance in a Political Capacity, but only a Peradventure, *Who can tell but God will turn and repent?* when this, I say, is our Situation, every Mind that has the least Thought, must be anxious perplexed and agitated with many eager dubious Expectations. This is the present Situation of our Country; and this was the State of that populous and magnificent City, *Nineveh*, when the Words of my Text were first spoken.

Nineveh was the Metropolis of the *Assyrian* Empire: And how prodigiously populous it was, you may calculate from hence, That it contained more than six-score thousand Children, that were so young, that they could not distinguish the right Hand from the left. And the Number of Adults, in proportion to these, must be vast indeed. Its Extent was no less than three Days Journey. Profane Authors * tell us, it was forty-seven Miles in Circumference; and that, notwithstanding its vast Extent, it was surrounded with lofty Walls and Towers: The Walls, two hundred Feet high, and so very wide, that three Chariots might drive on them a-breast: And the Towers two hundred Feet in height, and fifteen hundred in number. But what became of this mighty *Nineveh* at last? Alas! it was turned into an Heap of Rubbish. Divine Patience was at length wearied out; and, though the Vengeance denounced by *Jonah*, was suspended, yet that foretold by *Nabum* was dreadfully executed.

And

* Diod. Sic. &c.

And what was the Cause of this Execution, and that Denunciation? The Cause of both was Sin; national, epidemical Sin, against an unknown God, the God of *Israel*; I say, against an *unknown* God: for *Nineveh* was an *Heathen* City, not favoured with the Knowledge of the true God by supernatural Revelation; much less with the Gospel, that most perfect Dispensation of divine Grace towards the Sons of Men. The *Ninevites* could not sin with such horrid Aggravations as we; and yet even they could sin to such a Degree, as to become utterly intolerable. They sinned against the Light of Nature, and that sufficed to bring down remediless Destruction upon them. This is mentioned as the Cause of the divine Displeasure, in *Jonah's* Commission. *Arise, go to Nineveh, that great City; and cry against it for their Wickedness is come up before me* *: their *Wickedness* has reached to Heaven; and can no longer be endured. But before the fatal Blow fall, let them have one Warning more — Oh! how astonishing are the Grace and Patience of God towards a guilty People! Even when their *Wickedness* has scaled the Heavens, and come up before Him, he condescends to give them another Warning, and suspends the Blow for at least forty Days longer, to see if they will at length repent.

Jonah, having tried in vain to disengage himself from the Message, is at length constrained to undertake it; and with the solemn and awful Gait of a Prophet, he walks from Street to Street, making this alarming Proclamation, *Yet forty Days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown* †. This was the Substance of his Sermon: But no

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doubt

* *Jonah* i. 2.† *Jonah* iii. 4.

doubt he spoke much more than is here recorded. No doubt, he produced his Credentials from the God of *Israel*, and gave them the History of his Reluctance to accept the Commission; of the Storm that pursued him, while attempting to make his Escape; of his miraculous Preservation in the Belly of a Fish, and his Deliverance thence. No doubt he also let them know, what was the Cause of the divine Displeasure against them, *viz.* their National Vices and Irreligion; and he perhaps intimated, That Repentance was the only possible Method of escaping the threatened Destruction. It is plain, however, they understood him in this Sense; for they actually did repent; but whether it was from the Light of Nature, or from *Jonah's* Preaching, they received this Direction, does not appear *.

And now, while the Prophet is delivering his Message, their Consciences tell them how ripe they are for this dreadful Doom; and the Spirit of God, no doubt, concurs, and impresses the Conviction upon their Hearts. Now, methinks, I see eager gazing Crowds following the Pro-

* Upon second Thoughts, it seems to me, that God saw it most proper to be upon the Reserve in this Point; and that he did not reveal to *Jonah* his gracious Design to pardon them upon their Repentance; nor *Jonah* to the *Ninevites*. — That God did not reveal it to *Jonah*, seems probable from hence, that he had some Expectation the City would be destroyed, though he saw their Repentance: and hence he waited for the Event, and was greatly chagrined when disappointed. He seemed indeed to have presumed what the Event would be, from the known Mercy and Patience of God, (Chap. iv. 2.) but this implies, that he had no express Revelation for it. — That *Jonah* did not reveal this to the *Ninevites*, appears from my Text, where they speak of the Event as dreadfully uncertain, even though they should repent.

phet from Street to Street ; Paleness is in every Countenance, and Horror in every Heart. Now the Man of Business remits his eager Pursuits ; the Man of Pleasure is struck with a Damp in his thoughtless Career : Pride and Grandeur lower their haughty Airs ; and a general Horror spreads from the Cottage to the Throne. The People agree upon a public Fast : And when the Emperor hears of the awful Message, he issues forth his royal Edict, requiring an universal Abstinence from Food, and a deep Repentance and Reformation. He enjoins all to put on Sackcloth, the Habit of Mourners and Penitents in those Ages and Countries ; and, laying aside his royal Robes, and descending from his Throne, he puts on the mortifying Dress himself, and lies in the Dust. That the Humiliation might be the more moving and affecting, he orders, according to the Custom of the Time upon such solemn Occasions, that even the Beasts, the Flocks and Herds, should be restrained from Food, and compelled to join, as it were, with more guilty Men, in the general Humiliation, and in deprecating that Vengeance which was about to fall upon Man and Beast.

We have now a very moving Sight before us ; a gay magnificent City in Mourning ; thousands mourning in every Street : King and Subjects, High and Low, Old and Young, all covered in Sackcloth, and rolling in Ashes. And their Repentance does not wholly consist in these Ceremonies : The royal Proclamation further requires them, to *cry mightily unto God ; and turn every one from his evil Way.* They are sensible of the Propriety and Necessity of Prayer, earnest Prayer to God, and a Reformation of Life, as well as of afflicting themselves with Fasting.

The

The Light of Nature directed them to this as the only Method of Deliverance, if Deliverance was possible. The Case of such a People looks hopeful. That so many thousands should be brought to Repentance by one Warning, the first and only Warning they had ever received from a Prophet of the true God; a Prophet that was a contemptible Stranger from the despised Nation of the *Jews*; this certainly appears promising.

Alas! Brethren, our Countrymen are not so easily brought to Repentance: No, this is not an easy thing among us. Ten thousand Warnings, not only from Conscience, from divine Providence, from this very *Jonah*, and the other Prophets of the Old Testament, but also from the Gospel, that clear and perfect Revelation; I say, ten thousand Warnings, thus peculiarly enforced, have not so much Effect upon our Country, this Christian, this Protestant Country, as one short Warning from the Mouth of *Jonah*, had upon a City of Heathens and Idolaters. All along as I have been considering this Case, I could not cast out of my Mind that dreadful Declaration of Christ, *The Men of Nineveh shall rise up in Judgment with this Generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the Preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater than Jonas is here* *. *Nineveh* never had such loud Calls to Repentance, and such a rich Plenty of all the Means of Grace, as *Virginia*. The meanest in the Kingdom of Heaven, *i. e.* the meanest Christian under the full Revelation of the Gospel, is greater in spiritual Knowledge, not only than *Jonah*, but than *John the Baptist*, the greatest Prophet that was ever born of a Woman.

* Matt. xii. 41.

man. And therefore, I may accommodate these Words to us, *Behold a greater than Jonas is here.* Here are clearer Discoveries of the Will of God, and stronger Motives and Encouragements to Repentance, than ever *Jonah* could afford the Men of *Nineveh*. But alas! where is our Repentance? Where are our Humiliation and Reformation? Shall the Light of Nature, and one Warning from a Prophet, bring *Heathens* to the Knee before God; and shall not the Gospel, and all its loud Calls, have that Effect upon a *Christian Land*? Shall *Nineveh* repent in Sackcloth and Ashes; and shall *Virginia* sin on still, impenitent, thoughtless, luxurious and gay? Alas! what will be the End of this?

The Case of the *Ninevites*, who were brought to Repentance so readily, and so generally, looks hopeful, and seems to promise them an Exemption from the threatened Vengeance. And yet, so sensible was the King of *Nineveh* of their Demerit, and the Insufficiency of their Repentance to make Atonement for their Sins, that he is doubtful, after all, what would be the Consequence. *Who can tell*, says he; who knoweth, if God will turn and repent, and turn away from the Fierceness of his Anger, that we perish not? q. d. Let us humble ourselves never so low, we are not assured we shall escape: Vengeance may, after all, seize us; and we may be made Monuments to all the World of the Justice of the King of Kings, and the dreadful Consequences of national Impiety and Vice. His Uncertainty in this Matter might proceed from the just Sense he had of the intolerable Height, to which the national Wickedness had arrived; and of the Strictness of the divine Justice. He knew, that even in his own Govern-

Government, it would have very bad Consequences, if all Crimes should be forgiven, or pass unpunished, upon the Repentance of the Offender: And he forms the same Judgment concerning the divine Government. Indeed, it is natural to a Penitent, while he has a full View of his Sins, in all their Aggravations, and of the Justice of God, to question whether such Sins can be forgiven by so holy a God. He is apt even to fall into an Extreme, in this respect. It does not now appear so easy a thing to him to obtain a Pardon, as it once did, when he had no just Views of his Guilt. Now it appears a great Thing indeed; so great, that he can hardly think it possible. Or the Uncertainty of the King of *Nineveh* in this Point might proceed from *Jonah's* being so reserved upon it. He might have had no Commission from God to promise them Deliverance, upon their Repentance: But he was to warn them, and then leave them in the Hands of a gracious and righteous God, to deal with them according to his Pleasure. This tended to make them more sensible, that they *lay at Mercy*, and that he might justly do what he pleased with them. The Event indeed shewed, there was a Condition implied in the Threatning; and that God did secretly intend to spare them, upon their Repentance. But this was wisely concealed, and it was sufficient that the Event should make it known. It is certain, national as well as personal Repentance, may sometimes come too late; and that sometimes the Punishment may fall by way of Chastisement, even when the Repentance is sincere, and the Sin is forgiven, so that it shall not bring on the Destruction of the Sinner in the eternal World. But we may well

well suppose, an *Heathen* Monarch, who probably had no Instruction but from *Jonah's* short Warning, would be much at a Loss about these Things. From this Uncertainty of his, about the Fate of his Empire, we may infer this Truth, which I intend to illustrate with regard to ourselves, viz.

That sometimes a Nation may be in such a Situation, that no Man can tell what will be the Issue; or whether it shall be delivered from the threatened Vengeance, or destroyed.

But though the King of *Nineveh* was uncertain about this; yet, there was one Thing that he was very certain of, viz. That if there was any Possibility of Escape, it was to be hoped for only in the Way of earnest Prayer to God, general Humiliation and Reformation. This is evident from the Connexion of the Context. *Let Man and Beast, says he, be covered with Sackcloth, and cry mightily to God, yea, let them turn every one from his evil Way: — Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce Anger, that we perish not? i. e. Who can tell but he may turn away from his fierce Anger, in Case we turn from our evil Ways, and humble ourselves before him? If we do not reform, and humble ourselves, the Case is dreadfully plain; any one can tell that we cannot escape; there is not so much as a Peradventure for it; unavoidable Destruction will be our Doom, beyond all Question. But if we repent, who knows what that may do? Who knows but God may repent, and turn from the Fierceness of his Wrath? If there be any Hope at all, it is in this way. This he learned from the Light of Nature, if not from *Jonah's* Preaching.*

And this suggests another seasonable Truth, which, if my Time will allow, I shall also illustrate, viz.

That when a Nation is in such a State, that no Man can certainly determine what will be its Doom, if there be any possible Hope, it is only in the Way of general Humiliation, earnest Prayer, and public Reformation.

To prevent Mistakes, I have one Thing more to observe upon the Text; and that is, that when God is said to *repent*, it only signifies, that the visible Conduct of divine Providence has some *Resemblance* to the Conduct of Men, when they repent; and not that he is capable of Repentance in a proper Sense, or of that Changeableness, imperfect Knowledge, Sorrow and Self-accusation, which Repentance among Men implies. When Men repent that they have made a Thing, they destroy it; and therefore, when God destroyed Man by a Deluge, he is said to *repent* that he made him; and when he deposed *Saul*, it is said, he *repented* that he had made him King. When Men do not execute their Threatnings, it is supposed they repent of them; and hence, when God does not inflict the threatned Evil, he is said to *repent* of the Evil; *i. e.* he acts as Men do, when they repent of their Purpose; though when he made the Denunciation, he well knew the Event, and determined not to execute it, upon the Repentance of the Offenders. So with regard to *Nineveh*, there was no proper Repentance in God, but an uniform consistent Purpose. He purposed to denounce his Vengeance against that City; and he did so: He purposed and foresaw their Repentance; and it accordingly came to pass: He purposed to spare them upon their Repentance;

pentance; and he did so. All this is very consistent, and implies no proper Repentance in God; for in this Sense, *God is not a Man, that he should repent* *; but *he is of one Mind, and who can turn him?* and *what his Soul desireth, even that he doth* †.

I now enter upon the Illustration of the first Inference upon the Text, viz.

- I. *That sometimes a Nation may be in such a Situation, that no Man can tell what will be their Doom; whether the threatned Vengeance will fall upon them, or whether they shall escape.*

This, we have seen, was the Situation of *Nineveh*, though now lying in deep Repentance, and not in danger, as far as appears, from any visible Cause. Thousands were now mourning, praying and reforming; and we have no Account of an Enemy preparing to invade them. And if *Nineveh*, in this Situation, which seems so promising, was, notwithstanding, in such Danger, that no Man could determine what would be their Doom; alas! what shall we say of *Virginia*, and the Kingdoms to which we belong, when they are neither penitent before God, nor safe from the Arms of a powerful and victorious Enemy? If the Repentance of the *Ninevites* gave them no Assurance of Escape, but only a Peradventure, *Who can tell if God will turn from his fierce Anger?* certainly our Doom must, at best, be equally uncertain, when, instead of Repentance, Reformation, and mighty crying to God, we see the Generality impenitent, unreformed, and prayerless still? I would not damp you with unmanly Fears; but I cannot help saying, that our Doom is dismally uncertain. I know not

* Numb. xxiii. 19. † Job xxiii. 13.

what a provoked God intends to do with us and our Nation. I have my Hopes indeed; but they are balanced and sometimes *overbalanced*, with fearful and gloomy Apprehensions.

We are engaged in War with a powerful exasperated Enemy; and Blood is streaming by Sea and Land. Some decisive Blow will probably be struck ere long: But on what Party it will fall, and what will be the Issue of this Struggle and Commotion among the Nations, is an anxious Uncertainty. And this Uncertainty will appear, if we consider *the present Posture of Affairs* — *the Scripture Prophecies* with regard to future Events — and *the national Guilt and Impenitence*.

I. The Issue of the present War will appear dreadfully uncertain, if we consider *the present Posture of Affairs*.

The Circumstances of our Nation are in many respects encouraging. Loyalty and Unanimity have but seldom been so universal in our Mother-Country; and Loyalty, I dare say, but I cannot add Unanimity, is equally universal in the *British Colonies*, on this Continent. *Great-Britain* is very powerful by Sea, and, I believe, superior to any one Power in the World. She has also some powerful Allies, particularly *Prussia*, that now seems to hold the Balance of Power in *Europe* *. The *British Colonies* in *America* are very populous, and in some of them, particularly the *New-England* Provinces, a brave Spirit seems to prevail. The six Nations of the confederate *Indians* are generally in our Interest; and are of great Importance in the present Dispute. We also cannot but hope, that sundry of the *Indian Na-*

* What an awful Change is there in this Prince's Circumstances between O^a. 1756, when Mr. Davies preached this Sermon, and the present Time, O^a. 1757!

tions that lie on the Frontiers of our *Southern Colonies*, will, at least, maintain a Neutrality; and some of them perhaps, be active for us. These are encouraging Circumstances; and should not be ungratefully overlooked.

But on the other hand, let us cast into the Balance the superior Advantages of our Enemies, which may justly alarm our Fears. *France* is vastly superior to us in Land-Forces; and she is now very powerful by Sea also, and daily increasing her Strength in that Element, the proper Element of *Britain*. After all our vain Boasts of *British* Bravery, it does not appear but the *French* are, at least, equal to us in Courage; as they are confessedly superior in the Arts of Policy and Intrigue, and in unwearied Activity, and a steady and vigorous Prosecution of their Schemes. They conduct their Designs with Secrecy, Vigour and Dispatch; and are generally beforehand with us in all their Undertakings. *France* is also very powerful in her Alliances. The Crown of *France* is now in the House of *Bourbon*; and the Branches of that Family are in Possession of the wide extended *Spanish* Monarchy, of *Sicily*, *Naples*, *Parma*, &c. And as these Branches are united to *France* not only by Birth, but Religion, we cannot but expect, that when they cannot maintain a Neutrality, they will more naturally espouse the Interest of *France*, than that of *Britain*. The *Empress Queen*, so much obliged to our King, both for the Preservation of her hereditary Dominions in the last War, and for the Advancement of her Husband to be *Emperor* of *Germany*, has most ungratefully deserted the *British* Interest, and entered into a firm Alliance with *France*. This may probably have some Influence with sundry of the *German* Princes to engage

engage on the same Side; which some of them, without such an Excitement, seem already disposed to do. The *Pope* also, who still retains a considerable Influence in the *European* Courts of the same Religion, will not only be ready to employ his own Forces against the *Protestants*, especially against *Britain*, the Bulwark of the Reformation, but also to stir up other Powers to engage in the same Cause. The *Genoese*, who may be of great Service to *France*, by their Shipping, and their rich Bank of *St. George*, are already active in her Interest. *Sweden* and *Denmark*, though *Protestant States*, seem disposed to verge to the same Side; or at best to remain neuter. The *Hollanders*, on whose Assistance we had Reason to depend, are intimidated by the *French* from fulfilling their Engagements to the *British* Crown; and clandestinely assist our Enemies by furnishing them with Necessaries, and carrying on their Trade in *Dutch* Bottoms. The King of *Sardinia*, that was so active an Ally to us in the last War, now lies by, and will not declare himself. In *America*, the *French*, who, a few Years ago, were so contemptible, and had not one Man to twenty of the *English*, have in a little time become formidable by their indefatigable Activity, their surprizing Successes, and especially by their numerous *Indian* Allies. By our own Mismanagement, and by the Artifices of their *Jesuit* Missionaries, and other Emissaries, they have secured to their Interest most of the Tribes of the Natives in *North-America*; and some that were once our Friends, particularly the *Delawares* and *Shawaneese*: and whether we can retain the Friendship of the *Chirokees* and the other *South-west Indians* by the Dint of Presents, and all the Arts we can use, is very doubtful;

ful ; especially since the *Chirokees* have perfidiously refused to furnish us with the Number of Men stipulated by Treaty, tho' we have honourably complied with our Engagements. Now, when we take a serious View of these Things, who can tell what will be the Issue ? Must not our Minds be anxiously suspended between Hope and Fear ? If we should suppose divine Providence should look on, and remain neuter, and suffer the Arm of Flesh to fight it out, and the Event to be determined by the intrinsic Strength of the contending Parties, and their respective Allies, certainly we have no Reason for high Expectations ; but, on the other hand, have no small Reason to fear, and forebode dismal Things. For if we balance the intrinsic Forces, the Allies, the Courage, Conduct, and all the Advantages and Disadvantages of the contending Parties, it is but too likely, the Scale may turn against us. We have the Advantage in sundry Respects ; but, upon the whole, the Advantage seems to lie on the Side of our Enemies.

Further ; the rapid Conquests of the *French*, in so short a time, are really surprizing, and may fill us with dismal Apprehensions. We were beforehand with them in our military Preparations, and in seizing many of their Ships ; but they have already made Reprisals in taking the Island of *Minorca*, and the important Fortress of *Oswego*. In short, they have not failed of Success in any one of their Expeditions, except in the Engagement with General *Johnston* ; and that Defeat was not at all surprizing, if it be considered, that our Men had the Advantage of Cannon and Entrenchments, and were little inferior in Number. On the other hand, hardly any of our Expeditions, however promising, have been successful ;
but

but the higher our Expectations, the more mortifying have been our Disappointments. Now, if we prognosticate the Progress and Event of this War, from its Beginning, certainly we have Reason to forebode dismal Things.

It is also worthy of Notice, that their Successes, and our Defeats and Disappointments, have been equally surprising and unexpected. Who could have expected, that four or five hundred sculking Savages, would have defeated General *Braddock* with thrice that Number of Men, and with the Advantage of a fine Artillery? Who could have expected, that *Oswego*, garrisoned with fifteen hundred Men, furnished with Artillery and Ammunition for a brave Defence, and with a Sufficiency of Provisions to hold out a long Siege, would have been taken by an Army of *French* and *Indians*, not above double in Number; and that in two or three Days *, and with but little Trouble; though they had little or no Artillery, but what they took from *Fort-Ontario*; which they had just taken from us? If Treachery or Cowardice was the Cause, it is as discouraging a Cause as can be assigned; for the same Cause may be, and produce the same fatal Effect, in other Places: And thus we may perish by our own Hands. Who would have thought, that *Britain*, so superior in naval Power, should have been prevented by a *French* Fleet, from sending timely Succours to *Fort St. Philip*, which might have enabled the brave *Blakeney* to hold out the Siege? Especially, who would have expected, that we should have sustained this Loss, not by the superior Power of the Enemy, but by the Cowardice

* By later Accounts, it seems to have been taken in two or three Hours; and that the *French* did not lose a Man, and we but four or five.

of an *English Admiral*? Who could have conjectured, that our Expedition last *Spring* against the *Shawanese*, would have come to nothing for want of Provisions, and by mistaking the way to their Towns? We could not but hope that our *Northern Army*, which last Year consisted of near *nine thousand*, and this Year of about *fifteen thousand*, would have been able to strike some decisive Blow, or at least to have made an Attempt upon *Crown-Point*: but alas! we are disappointed, and nothing is like to be done this Year. Now these are strange Events; they did not at all seem likely from visible Causes, or from the Arm of Flesh. And therefore, the Agency of Providence is more evident in them. It seems but too likely, tho' it strikes me with Horror to admit the Thought, that a provoked God intends to scourge us with the Rod of *France*, and therefore gives surprising Success to her Arms. Who can tell, but the King of *France* may have the same Commission given him by that God, whom we and our Mother-Country have so grievously offended, as was given to the *Assyrian Monarch*, in *Isaiab's* Time, when God speaks of him as his Rod, to chastise his own People, and as acting by a Commission from him, though he neither knew nor designed it, but only intended to gratify his own Ambition? O *Assyrian*, the Rod of mine Anger, and the Staff in their Hand is mine Indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical Nation; and against the People of my Wrath will I give him a Charge to take the Spoil, and to take the Prey, and to tread down like the Mire of the Streets. Howbeit, he meaneth not so; neither doth his Heart think so: but it is in his Heart to destroy, and cut off Nations not a few. But at the same time it is foretold, That when the Lord hath performed his

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whole Work upon Mount Zion, and on Jerusalem, I will punish the Fruit of the stout Heart of the King of Assyria, and the Glory of his high Locks. (Isa. x. 5, 6, 7, 12.) And if the same Commission be given to the King of *France*, I doubt not but his End will be the same. When God has finished his Work of Correction with this Rod, he will break it, or burn it in the Fire. The like Commission was given to *Nebuchadnezzar*, King of *Babylon*; and when he, and his Son, and his Son's Son, had served as the Executioners of God's Wrath upon his People, and the neighbouring Nations, they and the *Babylonian* Empire were destroyed together. *Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Because ye have not heard my Words, behold, I will send and take all the Families of the North, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon my Servant, (my Servant, to execute this my Work of Correction, and of Vengeance) and I will bring them against this Land, and against the Inhabitants thereof, and against all these Nations round about, and I will utterly destroy them, and make them an Astonishment, and an Hissing, and perpetual Desolations — But it shall come to pass, when seventy Years are accomplished, the Space of time allotted for his Power, and the Correction of God's People, that then will I punish the King of Babylon, and that Nation, saith the Lord, for their Iniquity, and the Land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual Desolations. (Jer. xxv. 8—12—14.)* Thus you see it is no uncommon thing for God, when Transgressions are come to the full, to raise up some Power to perform his Work of Chastisement and Vengeance, and render it victorious and irresistible, till that Work is done; and then to crush it in its turn. And whether divine Providence is now about to employ the Power of *France* for this Purpose,

pose, is a dreadful Uncertainty. We hope, indeed, Matters will take a more favourable Turn; but the present Posture of Affairs, and particularly the rapid Conquests of that Power which is now become so formidable even in *America*, give us reason to fear this may be the Event, and that Matters are now ripening fast for this terrible Result.

I may add, That we have reason to fear from the Disposition and Conduct of many among ourselves. Some, in high Places, have been suspected of Treachery or Cowardice, or at least of bad Conduct, particularly in the *Mediterranean*, and at *Oswego*. A Spirit of Security, Sloth, and Cowardice, evidently prevails in these *Southern Colonies*; and nothing great is so much as attempted, much less executed. We have also so many black Foreigners among ourselves, as may justly alarm our Fears; and in *South-Carolina*, they are much more numerous than the *Country-Militia* *. Now if the *French* should invade our Frontiers; if the *Indians*, that are now neuter, or in the *British* Interest, should join with them, and with those Tribes that are already so active upon their Side; and if their united Forces should pour down upon us, and meet with a welcome Reception and Assistance from so powerful an Enemy among ourselves; I say, should this be the Case, I need not tell you what unexampled Scenes of Blood, Cruelty, and Devastation would open in our Country. This may not be the Event; and I hope and pray it may not: but it is not so improbable as we could wish; much less is it im-

* Col. P -- R---pb told me, that the Militia of that Province does not exceed seven thousand, and that the Negroes are as numerous there, as in *Virginia*; which makes the Proportion about seven to forty-seven.

possible. Who knows but this may actually be the Consequence?

And if the natural Allies of *France*, together with the *Popish* Princes, should form a Confederacy against our Mother-Country, and attack her with their united Strength, how terrible would the Consequences probably be, both to her and to us, especially if the *Protestant* Powers should not vigorously concur with us against them? This Event also may not happen; and I hope and pray it may not: but it is not so unlikely as one could wish. — But,

2. The Event of the present War will appear dismally doubtful, if we consider some Scripture Prophecies, particularly in *Daniel* and the *Revelations*.

I cannot pretend to enter deeply into this Subject at present; a Subject that has filled so many Volumes, and employed the Thoughts and Pens of so many great Men. It will be sufficient to my present Purpose to observe,

(1.) That the idolatrous persecuting Power of Popery, seated at *Rome*, is undoubtedly meant by the little Horn in *Daniel* *, that rose up out of the *Roman* Empire, when it was divided into ten Kingdoms by the barbarous Nations that broke in upon it: An Horn, *which had a Mouth speaking great things; which made war with the Saints, and prevailed against them; an Horn, which speaks great things against the most High, and wears out the Saints of the most High; and thinks to change Times and Laws, i. e. to alter and corrupt the Ordinances of God* †. The same idolatrous persecuting Power is also intended in the *Revelations* ‖, by the *Beast with seven Heads and ten Horns, that had a Mouth given him speaking*

* Dan. vii. 8. † ver. 24, 25. ‖ Rev. xiii.

ing great things, and Blasphemies : and he opened his Mouth in Blasphemy against God, &c. and it was given unto him to make war with the Saints, and to overcome them, and Power was given him over all Kindreds, and Tongues, and Nations ; and all that dwell on the Earth shall worship him, whose Names are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life. The same idolatrous and persecuting Power is intended likewise by the *Woman* * *sitting upon a scarlet-coloured Beast, having seven Heads, and ten Horns ; full of Names of Blasphemy, and drunk with the Blood of the Saints, and with the Blood of the Martyrs of Jesus.* Protestant Commentators generally agree in this Application of these Prophecies to the *Papal Power* ; but I cannot take time to lay before you the full Evidence upon which they proceed. However, I cannot but just observe, that the Angel-Interpreter expressly tells St. *John*, that *this Woman was that great City, which then reigned over the Kings of the Earth* † ; which undoubtedly means the City of *Rome*, that was then the Seat of universal Empire. But,

(2.) The Time of the Reign of this idolatrous and persecuting Power is determined in prophetic Numbers, both in *Daniel* and the *Revelations*. In *Daniel*, it is said, the Saints shall be given into the Hand of the Horns untill a *Time, Times, and the dividing of Time* ‖ . and that he shall scatter the Power of the holy People for a *Time, Times, and half a Time* ‡ . In the *Revelations* we are told, that the Church of Christ, represented by a Woman, shall continue in the Wilderness, *i. e.* in a State of Oppression and Persecution, under the *Popish Power*, for a *Time, Times, and half a Time* § ;
that

* Rev. xvii.

† ver. xviii.

‖ Dan. vii. 25.

‡ Dan. xii. 7.

§ Rev. xii. 14.

*that the outer Court of the Temple, and the holy City, another Emblem of the true Church of Christ, shall be given to the Gentiles, i. e. subjected to a Power no better than Heathen, and by them trodden under Foot, Forty two Months; that the Church should be fed in the Wilderness for twelve hundred and sixty Days *; and that the two Witnesses, i. e. the small Remnant of the Faithful, who shall retain the Purity of the Gospel, and witness against the Corruptions of the Church of Rome, shall prophesy twelve hundred and sixty Days in Sackcloth.* These are but different Representations of the same Period: and in order to understand them, you are to observe, that in this Calculation, a Day signifies a Year; and therefore twelve hundred and sixty Days are twelve hundred and sixty Years. A Month consists of thirty such Days, i. e. thirty Years; for the Months among the Ancients were invariably made up of but thirty Days, as their Year consisted only of three hundred and sixty Days. Now forty two Months, multiplied by thirty, just make twelve hundred and sixty Years. So Time signifies one Year, Times two Years, and half a Time, or the dividing of Time, half a Year: now one Year and two Years making three Years, and the half Year added to them make three Years and a half. These three Years and an half contain thrice three hundred and sixty Years, and the half of three hundred and sixty, (*viz.* one hundred and eighty) which make exactly twelve hundred and sixty Years. So that all these Calculations amount to the same thing, *viz.* twelve hundred and sixty Years. This is undoubtedly the Duration of the *Popish* Tyranny, and of the Oppression of the Saints, and the Cause of Truth. Now if we could find out when it began, whether when the

* Rev. xii. 6.

the Pope usurped and exercised the Substance of ecclesiastical Authority as universal Bishop, which was in the fifth Century; or when he was formally invested with that Authority by the Emperor *Phocas*, A. D. 606; or when he was made a secular Prince, and had a civil Authority added to his ecclesiastical, by *Pipin* King of *France*, A. D. 756; I say, if we could find out when this Space of twelve hundred and sixty Years began, we could easily find out when it will end: and this would help us to determine what will be the Event of the present War, whether the Oppression of the *Protestant* Cause, or the Downfal of the bloody Power of *Popery*, that has undoubtedly held the World in Ignorance, Idolatry, and Slavery, for above a thousand Years. But after all the Searches I can make, I am not able to form a certain Determination upon the Point; and Commentators differ so widely among themselves, that I have received but little Light from them. I must therefore leave you in that Uncertainty, in which I am myself; and consequently destitute of Light from these Predictions concerning the Event of the present War. But

(3.) Tho' this Period of twelve hundred and sixty Years is to be, *all through*, a Series of Tyranny and Persecution; and the Cause of Truth and its Advocates, are continually under Oppression; yet there is a *short Space* in this Period, I suppose, from the Calculation in the *Revelations**, about *three Years and a half*, in which the Cause of Truth shall seem *entirely* suppressed, and its Friends utterly extinct; so that there will be no human Probability of their Revival, any more than of a human Body, that has lain dead three Days and a half. And upon this, the *Popish*
Powers

* Rev. xi. 9.

Powers shall exult and triumph, as if they had obtained an entire and lasting Victory. This is probably the Time referred to in *Daniel* (Chap. xii. 1.) as *a time of Trouble, such as never was since there was a Nation; even to that time*. During the rest of the twelve hundred and sixty Days, the Witnesses prophesied in *Sackcloth*, in a State of Mourning and Persecution: but in this Period they are *killed*; and their *dead Bodies* lie, unburied and insulted, in the Street of the great City, *i. e.* in the *Roman Territories*: and *they that dwell upon the Earth, shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and send Gifts one to another* *. This is a melancholy Time indeed for the few Servants of Jesus Christ. And who can tell, whether it be past, or whether it be future, and the Issue of the present War? I could easily lay before you the Opinions of good and great Men on this Point; but they are so various, that they could not bring you to any certain Conclusion upon it. Some suppose it past; and that it was either a little before the Reformation, when the *Albigenses* and *Waldenses*, who had been Witnesses for a long time against the Corruptions of *Popery*, were, in Appearance, utterly extirpated by a Series of bloody Persecutions, at the *Pope's* Instigation: And if this was the Period, then the Resurrection of the Witnesses, and their being caught up into Heaven, must signify the Revival of their Cause at the Reformation, and the raising up of *Luther*, *Calvin*, and other Reformers, in the same Spirit. Or, as others suppose, this melancholy Time was about the Year 1550, when the Persecution raged in *England* under *Queen Mary*, and the civil Wars in *France*, *Germany*, and the *Low Countries*, on account of Religion, seemed to threaten the utter
 Extinction

* Rev. xi. 7—10.

Extinction of the *Protestant* Cause. Those that suppose this Time is past, have sundry Arguments, that are at least plausible, to support their Opinion; and if I have any Opinion at all, in so doubtful a Matter, I incline to this.

There are others, of no small Judgment in such Matters, that apprehend this melancholy Period is yet to come; and they too have their Reasons, which I cannot now mention. And if this be the Case, who can tell but the melancholy Time is now at hand, and that the present Commotions in *Europe* are working up to it? This is certain, it will be introduced by War: for we are expressly told, that *when the two Witnesses have finished their Testimony, the Beast shall make War against them, and shall overcome them and kill them* *; and that just before the pouring out of the seventh Vial, which shall utterly destroy the *Popish* Powers, and introduce the Kingdom of Christ, the Kings of the Earth, by *Popish* Instigation, shall gather themselves together to the Battle of the great Day of God Almighty, in a Place called *Armageddon* †, or *Megiddo*, where good *Josiah*, the great Reformer of the *Jewish* Religion, was slain. *I saw the Beast*, says St. John, *and the Kings of the Earth, and their Armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the Horse, i. e. against Jesus Christ and his Army* ||. *Popery* will die hard, and its last Struggles be very violent. It will collect all its Forces, and make one bold Push, to recover its lost Authority: and this will undoubtedly be attended with much Slaughter. But whether it will be victorious in the *first* Attack, and at this Time slay the Witnesses; or whether the Lamb and his Army will *immediately* prevail, as he cer-

* Rev. xi. 7. † xvi. 13, 14, 16. || xix. 19.

tainly will at last *; this seems uncertain. Now who can tell, but the present War is the Commencement of this grand decisive Conflict between the Lamb and the Beast, *i. e.* between the *Protestant* and *Popish* Powers? The *Pope* first received his Principality and secular Authority from *Pipin*, one of the Kings of *France*: and there seems to be something congruous in it, that *France* should also take the Lead, and be, as it were, the General of his Forces, in this last decisive Conflict for the Support of that Authority. This is also remarkable, and almost peculiar to the present War, *viz.* that *Protestants* and *Papists* are not blended together in it by promiscuous Alliances: but *France* and her Allies are all *Papists*; and *Britain* and her Allies are all *Protestants*; and consequently, whatever Party fall, the Religion of that Party is like to fall too. If *France* and her Allies should prove victorious, then we may conclude the Period for slaying the Witnesses is just coming. But if *Britain* and her Allies should be victorious, then we may conclude that Time is past, and that the Time is just come, when it shall be proclaimed, *Babylon is fallen! is fallen!* But all this is uncertain, at least to me, 'till the Event make it plain; and for that we must wait with anxious Suspence.

But here I cannot help mentioning one thing, to mitigate your Anxieties; and that is, that however bloody and desolating this last Conflict may be, it will bring about the most glorious and happy Revolution, that ever was in the World. It will quite change the Face of things, *introduce a new Heaven and a new Earth, wherein Righteousness shall dwell*; and it will new-model the

* See the final Issue of this grand decisive Conflict described in most lively Terms, Rev. xix. from ver. 11. *ad fin.*
Kingdoms

Kingdoms of the World, and they shall become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever *. Then Satan shall be bound, and Christ shall reign in the Hearts of Men, a thousand Years. How remarkable upon this Head are the Prophecies of Daniel, above two thousand Years ago! I beheld, says he, and the little Horn made war with the Saints, and prevailed against them until the Ancient of Days came, i. e. came to give Dominion, and Glory, and a Kingdom to the Son of Man †; and then Judgment was given to the Saints of the most High; and the time came that the Saints possessed the Kingdom ‖. They shall be uppermost in their Turn, and be finally triumphant. All the other Empires and Kingdoms of the World have been subject to Revolutions, passed from Hand to Hand, and at length fallen to pieces: but this, says Daniel, is a Kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; a Kingdom that shall not be left to other People; but it shall break to pieces and consume all the Kingdoms that were before it, and it shall stand for ever §.—Hail, happy Period! how long wilt thou delay? Lord Jesus, let thy Kingdom come! Let it come, tho' to make Way for it, many Thrones must totter, that are now the Supports of Antichrist: Let it come, tho' many Kingdoms should be overturned, and many Countries stream with Blood; tho' we and Millions more should be crushed in the grand Revolution. See, Brethren, the happy Result of all the Commotions that are, or have been, on this restless Globe: See to what a glorious End they all tend. And who would not willingly live a while longer in this World of Sin and Sorrow, and share in the Calamities of War, and all the

* Rev. xi. 15.

† Dan. vii. 21, 22.

‖ Ver. 13, 14.

§ Dan. ii 44.

Plagues reserved for the latter Times, if he may but see this blessed Period? But if we should not be so happy as to see it with mortal Eyes, such of us as die in the Lord, shall receive the welcome Intelligence of it in Heaven, and rejoice in it as much as its proper Subjects on Earth. — You will forgive me, if I have dwelt too long upon this new and curious Subject. I shall now proceed with more Haste. Therefore

3. The Event of the present War, and the Doom of our Country and Nation, will appear dreadfully uncertain, if we consider our national Guilt and Impenitence.

Let *Atheists* and *Epicureans* say what they please, it is an eternal Truth, which all the World will be made to know at last, that *Jehovah* is the Ruler of the Universe; that the Fate of Kingdoms is in his Hands; that he is the sovereign Arbitrer of War, and determines Victory as he pleases. It is also certain, that Rewards and Punishments are essential to his Government, as they are to all other Governments. In the World to come, he will reward or punish Individuals, according to their personal Works; and in the present World he will reward or punish Nations, according to their national Works — in the *present World*, I say, because it is only in the present World they subsist in a national Capacity, and are capable of national Rewards and Punishments. Now there is a Time, *when the Transgressors are come to the full **, when the Measure of a People's Iniquity is filled up, and they are ripe for Vengeance. And then the Executioners of divine Vengeance, the Sword, Famine, pestilential Diseases, Earthquakes, and the like, are turned loose among them. Then the dread Commission is issued out,

Put

* Dan. viii. 23.

*Put ye in the Sickle, for the Harvest is ripe : come, get ye down ; for the Press is full ; the Vats overflow ; for their Wickedness is great **. Then all the Undertakings of such a People are blasted ; and even *the worst* of the *Heathen* † succeed against them. That Nation is thrown off from the Hinge, on which Empire turns ; and therefore must fall. The Lord of Armies is against them ; and by a secret, but irresistible Hand, brings on their Destruction.

Now, whether that fatal Period be arrived with respect to us and our Nation, I will not determine ; nor indeed am I capable. But I am sure, it is not evident, that it is not come. I am sure our Land is full of Sin against the Holy One of *Israel*. On this Subject I have often enlarged ; and now, I am afraid, it is a trite disregarded Tale. The Sins of our Land lie heavy upon it : the Sins of all Ranks and Denominations ; the Sins of past and present Generations ; Sins against the Law, and against the Gospel ; Sins against Mercies, and against Judgments ; Sins in Heart, in Language, in Practice ; Sins of all Kinds and Degrees, and against all Sorts of Obligations : Oh ! what a huge Heap, what an intolerable Burden, do all these Sins make ! The Sins of many Millions on both sides the *Atlantic* ! Our Body politic is a huge Mass of Corruption ; *the whole Head is sick ; and the whole Heart faint : from the Sole of the Foot unto the Head there is no Soundness in it, but all is full of Wounds and Bruises, and putrifying Sores* ‖. And does not this leave our Doom in a dreadful Suspence ? Who can tell what will be the Fate of so guilty a People ? Can we indulge high Hopes, with such a Load of Guilt upon us ? Sin lies like a dead Weight upon
our

* Joel iii, 13. † Ezek. vii. 24. ‖ Isa. i. 6.

our Counsels, our Designs, and Expeditions; and crushes them all. What tho' our Enemies be as wicked as ourselves, with only this Exception, that they have not our Advantages, and therefore cannot sin with our Aggravations? But what if they were in all Respects as bad? It has been no unusual thing for God to employ one guilty Nation to execute his Vengeance upon another; and when that Drudgery is done, (which, by the by, is more properly devolved upon a hated Nation, than upon his People; he has more *beneficent* and agreeable Work for them) I say, when that Drudgery is done, he executes the Executioner: just as one among a Number of Criminals, may be appointed to execute the rest; and then he is executed himself by some other Hand. Thus God employed the *Assyrians* and *Babylonians* to punish his People, the *Jews*; and when they had, tho' undesignedly, done him that Service, he punishes them in a yet severer manner. And thus he threatens the *Jews* by *Ezekiel*, that he would bring the *worst* of the *Heathen* against them: *they* were good enough to be Executioners. So he employs Devils, the worst of Beings, to execute his Vengeance upon Sinners in Hell. And so in human Governments, the Refuse of Mankind are appointed Hangmen.

But tho' our Land be so full of Sin, yet there would be some ground to hope, could we see any Appearances of a general Repentance and Reformation. But alas! where shall we find it? I have been not altogether a heedless Observer of the Effects of the corrective and vindictive Providences of God, towards our Land, the Sword, a threatened Famine, and a deadly raging Distemper *.

* At this time, a Flux raged in the Congregation, and elsewhere, which baffled all the Power of Medicine; and swept off some whole Families almost entirely.

But

But I have been really shocked to observe the Issue. I am afraid, that even the People of God are not so effectually roused by these Warnings, as they should be. One would think, they would be all Life and Vigour, at such a Time as this: but alas! I am afraid, it is otherwise. I am especially afraid, that impenitent Sinners, instead of being melted into Repentance, are hardening more and more, like Clay in the Sun. Alas! I see and hear no more of serious Concern about eternal things among us, than if we lived in a healthy Neighbourhood, and a peaceful unmolested Country. I am afraid the Case of some bears a dismal Resemblance to that described, *Rev. xv. 10, 11. They gnawed their Tongues for Pain, and blasphemed the God of Heaven, because of their Pains and their Sores, and repented not of their Deeds; no, they are fully obstinate in Wickedness still.*

Brethren, what are we doing? Are we asleep at such a time as this, when the Judgments of Heaven are around us, and the Fate of our Country is so terribly doubtful? For God's Sake, for our Soul's Sake, for our Country's Sake, let us rouse ourselves from our Security; let us humble ourselves before God, *and cry mightily to him; and who can tell but he may turn away from his fierce Anger?* — Which leads me to the second Inference from my Text, *viz.*

II. That when a Nation is in such a doubtful Situation, that no Man can know its Doom, if there be any Hope, it is only in the Way of Repentance, Reformation, and earnest Prayer.

This appears the only Way of Hope on two Accounts.

1. Na-

1. National Sin has a *direct Tendency, in its own Nature*, to weaken and destroy a Nation. It is the deadly Disease of a Body politic, which will destroy it, without the Hand of an Executioner. It spreads Corruption, Injustice, Treachery, Discord, Confusion, Cowardice, through a Nation; and it destroys Public Spirit, the Love of our Country, Unanimity, Courage, and all the social and heroic Virtues, which naturally tend to strengthen, defend, and advance a People. Now Repentance, Reformation, and Prayer, is the proper Cure for this Disease; it purges out these internal Principles of Death; and implants and cherishes the opposite Principles of Virtue and Life. But this is not all; for

2. Repentance, Reformation and Prayer, is the only Way to *turn away the Displeasure of God, and obtain his Favour and Protection*. Sin brings upon a People the Curse of a provoked God; and under this they fade and wither away, like a blasted Flower, or a Tree struck with Lightning from Heaven. But if it be possible to remove it, and obtain the divine Favour, it is only by deep Humiliation before him, by a thorough Reformation from those Sins that provoke him, and by earnest Cries for Mercy. The Light of Nature taught the Men of *Nineveh*, that this was the only Way of Hope: and Revelation assures us of the same thing. It is only to the Penitent that the Promises of Deliverance are made; and without Repentance, we have no possible Claim to them. Deliverances are generally Answers to Prayer; and therefore without earnest Prayer, we cannot expect them. National Judgments are inflicted for national Sins; and therefore Reformation from national Sins, is the only hopeful Way to escape them.

Therefore,

Therefore, my Brethren, let us betake ourselves to this only Method of Hope. Let us deeply humble ourselves before God; *let us cry mightily to him; and let us turn every one from our evil Ways:* and then, *who can tell but God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce Anger, that we perish not?*

But in all my Exhortations of this kind, I must remember, that Repentance and Reformation is the Duty of *fallen* Creatures; of Creatures so depraved and feeble, that they are not *able*, of themselves, so much as to apply the Remedy. If you attempt this Work with the Pride of imaginary Self-sufficiency, you may be sure Disappointment will be the Consequence. Therefore remember, that it is the holy Spirit of God alone, that is the Author of a thorough Repentance, and effectual Reformation. It is He alone, that can effectually convince the World of Sin. If He be absent, Legislators may make Laws against Vice, Philosophers may reason, Ministers may preach, nay, Conscience may remonstrate, the divine Law may prescribe and threaten, the Gospel may invite and allure; but all will be in vain: all will not produce one true Penitent. The strongest Arguments, the most melting Intreaties, the most alarming Denunciations, from God and Man, enforced by the highest Authority, for by the most compassionate Tears, all will have no Effect; all will not effectually reclaim one Sinner, nor gain one sincere Profelyte to Righteousness. *Paul, Apollos, and Cephas*, with all their Apostolical Abilities, can do nothing to purpose, without the Holy Spirit. *Paul may plant, and Apollos water; but*

*God alone can give the Increase. So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth; they are both nothing together: but God, who giveth the Increase *, is all in all. 'Till the Spirit be poured forth from on high, says Isaiah, Briars and Thorns shall come up upon the Land of my People, i. e. their Country shall be laid waste, and be made a mere Wilderness of Briars and Thorns, by the Ravages of War: or the People themselves shall be like Briars and Thorns, fruitless, noxious, and troublesome. In this Language the Prophet Micah describes the same People: The best of them is as a Briar; the most upright is sharper than a Thorn-Hedge. (Micah vii. 4.) Such shall they continue, UNTIL the Spirit be poured upon them from on high. But when that happy Time comes, then the Wilderness shall be a fruitful Field: then Judgment shall dwell in the Wilderness, and Righteousness shall remain in the fruitful Field. This Effusion of the Spirit shall put an end to the Desolations of War, and establish them in the Possession of lasting and extensive Peace; For, as it is there added, the Work of Righteousness shall be Peace, and the native Effect of Righteousness shall be Quietness and Assurance for ever: and my People shall dwell in a peaceable Habitation, and in sure Dwellings, and in quiet Resting-places. (Isa. xxxii. 13—18.) You see, my Brethren, of how much Importance and Necessity the Spirit is, to produce a Reformation, and that blessed Peace and Security, both personal and national, both within and without, which is the Effect of it.*

And

* 1 Cor. iii. 7.

And how are we to expect his sacred Influences? Or in what way may we hope to attain them? The Answer is, **PRAY FOR THEM**: Pray frequently, pray fervently, *Lord, thy Spirit! O give thy Spirit! That is the Blessing I want; the Blessing which Families, and Nations, and the whole human Race want.* Pray in your Retirements; pray in your Families; pray in Societies appointed for that purpose; pray in warm Ejaculations, pray without ceasing, for this grand fundamental Blessing. Hear what Encouragement Christ has given to Prayer, in this Particular. *Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you. — If ye, being evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your Children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him**? Endeavour to repent in this humble self-diffident manner; and you may hope it will at least avail to your eternal Salvation; and who knows but it may avail also to turn away the fierce Anger of God from your Country and Nation?

P O S T S C R I P T.

March 17, 1757.

What was said, p. 15, that “the *Chirokees* have perfidiously refused to furnish us with the Number of Men”, (*viz.* four hundred at least

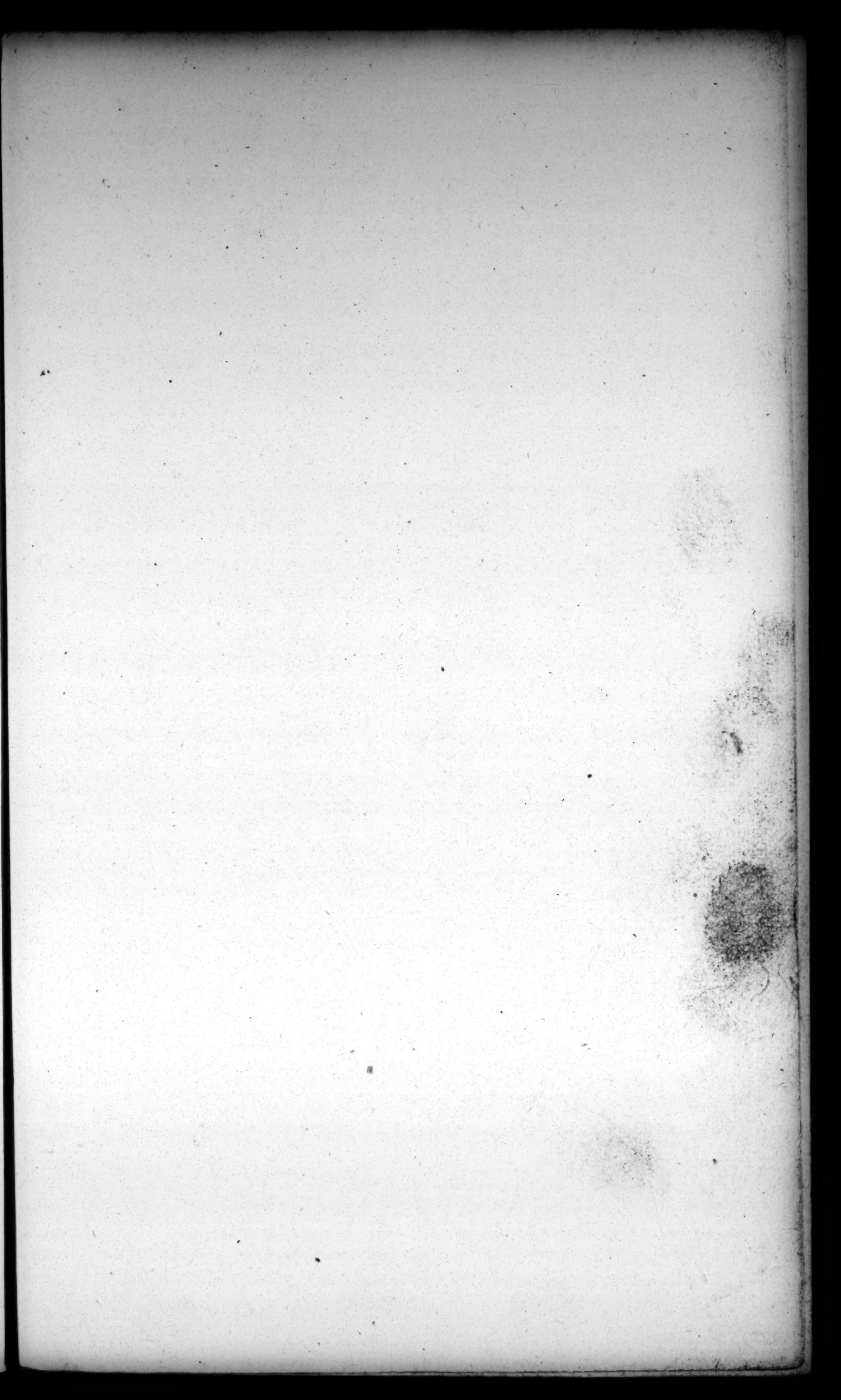
* Luke xi. 9---13.

least) " stipulated by Treaty, " still continues true: though two little Parties of them, the one of about fifteen Men, and the other of about eight or nine, have lately come to our Assistance, and seem zealous in the *British* Interest.

When the foregoing Sermon was preached, the News of the Empress of *Russia's* acceding to the Alliance between the Courts of *Versailles* and *Vienna*, had not reached *Virginia*. And therefore it is asserted, p. 26, that "*France* and " her Allies are all *Papists*." The *Russians* indeed belong to the *Greek Church*: but that Church is infected with so many of the Corruptions of *Popery*, that she much more nearly resembles a *Popish Church* than a *Protestant*. And therefore there is but little Reason to retract or soften that Assertion, even since this unhappy Alliance.

F I N I S.





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